

REPORTS OF THE
WORLD CONFERENCE ON
FAITH AND ORDER

LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND
AUGUST 3 to 21, 1927



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Extract from the instructions given August 18, 1927, by the World Conference on Faith and Order to the Continuation Committee.

That to all of those Churches that have sent delegates the findings of this Conference shall be sent through their official channels at as early a date as possible, asking those Churches to consider the findings and report back to the Continuation Committee the results of their deliberations, in view of which the Continuation Committee shall consider what steps need to be taken for another Conference.

Publications about the World Conference on Faith and Order may be had from the Secretariat, P. O. Box 226, Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

Please send the names and addresses of any persons who might be interested in the movement.

PREAMBLE

unanimously adopted by the full Conference
August 20, 1927

We, representatives of many Christian Communion throughout the world, united in the common confession of faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour, believing that the Spirit of God is with us, are assembled to consider the things wherein we agree and the things wherein we differ. We now receive the following series of reports as containing subject matter for the consideration of our respective Churches in their common search for unity.

This is a Conference summoned to consider matters of Faith and Order. It is emphatically *not* attempting to define the conditions of future reunion. Its object is to register the apparent level of fundamental agreements within the Conference and the grave points of disagreements remaining; also to suggest certain lines of thought which may in the future tend to a fuller measure of agreement.

Each subject on the agenda was first discussed in plenary session. It was then committed to one of the sections, of more than one hundred members each, into which the whole Conference was divided. The report, after full discussion in subsections, was finally drawn up and adopted unanimously or by a large majority vote by the section to which it had been committed. It was twice presented for further discussion to a plenary session of the Conference when it was referred to the Churches in its present form.

Though we recognise the reports to be neither exhaustive nor in all details satisfactory to every member of the Conference, we submit them to the Churches for that deliberate consideration which could not be given in the brief period of our sessions. We thank God and rejoice over agreements reached; upon our agreements we build. Where the reports record differences, we call upon the Christian world to an earnest reconsideration of the conflicting opinions now held, and a strenuous endeavour to reach the truth as it is in God's mind, which should be the foundation of the Church's unity.

I. THE CALL TO UNITY

unanimously adopted by the full Conference
August 20, 1927

God wills unity. Our presence in this Conference bears testimony to our desire to bend our wills to His. However we may justify the beginnings of disunion, we lament its continuance and henceforth must labour, in penitence and faith, to build up our broken walls.

God's Spirit has been in the midst of us. It was He who called us hither. His presence has been manifest in our worship, our deliberations and our whole fellowship. He has discovered us to one another. He has enlarged our horizons, quickened our understanding, and enlivened our hope. We have dared and God has justified our daring. We can never be the same again. Our deep thankfulness must find expression in sustained endeavour to share the visions vouchsafed us here with those smaller home groups where our lot is cast.

More than half the world is waiting for the Gospel. At home and abroad sad multitudes are turning away in bewilderment from the Church because of its corporate feebleness. Our missions count that as a necessity which we are inclined to look on as a luxury. Already the mission field is impatiently revolting from the divisions of the Western Church to make bold adventure for unity in its own right. We of the Churches represented in this Conference cannot allow our spiritual children to outpace us. We with them must gird ourselves to the task, the early beginnings of which God has so richly blessed, and labour side by side until our common goal is reached.

Some of us, pioneers in this undertaking, have grown old in our search for unity. It is to youth that we look to lift the torch on high. We men have carried it too much alone through many years. The women henceforth should be accorded their share of responsibility. And so the whole Church will be enabled to do that which no section can hope to perform.

It was God's clear call that gathered us. With faith stimulated by His guidance to us here, we move forward.

REPORT OF SECTION II

received by the full Conference, *nem. con.*,
August 19, 1927

THE CHURCH'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD— THE GOSPEL.

The message of the Church to the world is and must always remain the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is the joyful message of redemption, both here and hereafter, the gift of God to sinful man in Jesus Christ.

The world was prepared for the coming of Christ through the activities of God's Spirit in all humanity, but especially in His revelation as given in the Old Testament; and in the fulness of time the eternal Word of God became incarnate, and was made man, Jesus Christ, the son of God and the son of Man, full of grace and truth.

Through His life and teaching, His call to repentance, His proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom of God and of judgment, His suffering and death, His resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, and by the mission of the Holy Spirit, He has brought to us forgiveness of sins, and has revealed the fulness of the living God, and His boundless love toward us. By the appeal of that love, shown in its completeness on the Cross, He summons us to the new life of faith, self sacrifice, and devotion to His service and the service of men.

Jesus Christ, as the crucified and the living One, as Saviour and Lord, is also the centre of the world-wide Gospel of the Apostles and the Church. Because He Himself is the Gospel, the Gospel is the message of the Church to the world. It is more than a philosophical theory; more than a theological system; more than a programme for material betterment. The Gospel is rather the gift of a new world from God to this old world of sin and death; still more, it is the victory over sin and death, the revelation of eternal life in Him who has knit together the whole family in heaven and on earth in the communion of saints, united in the fellowship of service, of prayer, and of praise.

The Gospel is the prophetic call to sinful man to turn to God, the joyful tidings of justification and of sanctification to those who believe in Christ. It is the comfort of those who suffer; to those who are bound, it is the assurance of the glorious liberty of the

sons of God. The Gospel brings peace and joy to the heart, and produces in men self-denial, readiness for brotherly service, and compassionate love. It offers the supreme goal for the aspirations of youth, strength to the toiler, rest to the weary, and the crown of life to the martyr.

The Gospel is the sure source of power for social regeneration. It proclaims the only way by which humanity can escape from those class and race hatreds which devastate society at present into the enjoyment of national well-being and international friendship and peace. It is also a gracious invitation to the non-christian world, East and West, to enter into the joy of the living Lord.

Sympathising with the anguish of our generation, with its longing for intellectual sincerity, social justice and spiritual inspiration, the Church in the eternal Gospel meets the needs and fulfils the God-given aspirations of the modern world. Consequently, as in the past, so also in the present, the Gospel is the only way of salvation. Thus, through His Church, the living Christ still says to men "Come unto me! . . . He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

REPORT OF SECTION III

received by the full Conference, *nem. con.*,
August 19, 1927

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

God who has given us the Gospel for the salvation of the world has appointed His Church to witness by life and word to its redeeming power. The Church of the Living God is constituted by His own will, not by the will or consent or beliefs of men whether as individuals or as societies, though He uses the will of men as His instrument. Of this Church Jesus Christ is the Head, the Holy Spirit its continuing life.

The Church as the communion of believers in Christ Jesus is, according to the New Testament, the people of the New Covenant; the Body of Christ; and the Temple of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.

The Church is God's chosen instrument by which Christ, through the Holy Spirit, reconciles men to God through faith, bringing their wills into subjection to His sovereignty, sanctifying them through the means of grace, and uniting them in love and service to be His witnesses and fellow-workers in the extension of His rule on earth until His Kingdom come in glory.

As there is but one Christ, and one life in Him, and one Holy Spirit who guides into all truth, so there is and can be but one Church, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

The Church on earth possesses certain characteristics whereby it can be known of men. These have been, since the days of the Apostles, at least the following:

1. The possession and acknowledgment of the Word of God as given in Holy Scripture and interpreted by the Holy Spirit to the Church and to the individual. (a)
2. The profession of faith in God as He is incarnate and revealed in Christ.
3. The acceptance of Christ's commission to preach the Gospel to every creature.
4. The observance of the Sacraments.
5. A ministry for the pastoral office, the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the Sacraments.

6. A fellowship in prayer, in worship, in all the means of grace, in the pursuit of holiness, and in the service of man.

As to the extent and manner in which the Church thus described finds expression in the existing Churches, we differ. Our differences chiefly concern:

1. The nature of the Church visible and the Church invisible, their relation to each other, and the number of those who are included in each. (b)
2. The significance of our divisions past and present. (c)

Whatever our views on these points, we are convinced that it is the will of Christ that the one life of the one body should be manifest to the world. To commend the Gospel to doubting, sinful and bewildered men, a united witness is necessary. We therefore urge most earnestly that all Christians in fulfilment of our Saviour's prayer that His disciples may be one reconsecrate themselves to God, that by the help of His Spirit the body of Christ may be built up, its members united in faith and love, and existing obstacles to the manifestation of their unity in Christ may be removed; that the world may believe that the Father has sent Him.

We join in the prayer that the time may be hastened when in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

NOTES

(a) Some hold that this interpretation is given through the tradition of the Church; others through the immediate witness of the Spirit to the heart and conscience of believers; others through both combined.

(b) For instance

1. Some hold that the invisible Church is wholly in heaven; others include in it all true believers on earth, whether contained in any organisation or not.
2. Some hold that the visible expression of the Church was determined by Christ Himself and is therefore unchangeable; others that the one Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit may express itself in varying forms.
3. Some hold that one or other of the existing Churches is the only true Church; others that the Church as we have de-

scribed it is to be found in some or all of the existing communions taken together.

4. Some, while recognising other Christian bodies as Churches, are persuaded that in the providence of God and by the teaching of history a particular form of ministry has been shown to be necessary to the best welfare of the Church; others hold that no one form of organisation is inherently preferable; still others, that no organisation is necessary.

(c) One view is that no division of Christendom has ever come to pass without sin. Another view is that the divisions were the inevitable outcome of different gifts of the Spirit and different understandings of the truth. Between these, there is the view of those who look back on the divisions of the past with penitence and sorrow coupled with a lively sense of God's mercy, which in spite of and even through these divisions has advanced His cause in the world.

REPORT OF SECTION IV

received by the full Conference, *nem. con.*,
August 19, 1927

THE CHURCH'S COMMON CONFSSION OF FAITH.

We members of the Conference on Faith and Order, coming from all parts of the world in the interest of Christian unity, have with deep gratitude to God found ourselves united in common prayer, in God our heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Notwithstanding the differences in doctrine among us, we are united in a common Christian Faith which is proclaimed in the Holy Scriptures and is witnessed to and safeguarded in the Ecumenical Creed, commonly called the Nicene, and in the Apostles' Creed, which Faith is continuously confirmed in the spiritual experience of the Church of Christ.

We believe that the Holy Spirit in leading the Church into all truth may enable it, while firmly adhering to the witness of these Creeds (our common heritage from the ancient Church) to express the truths of revelation in such other forms as new problems may from time to time demand.

Finally, we desire to leave on record our solemn and unanimous testimony that no external and written standards can suffice without an inward and personal experience of union with God in Christ.

NOTES.

1. It must be noted that the Orthodox Eastern Church can accept the Nicene Creed only in its uninterpolated form without the *filioque* clause; and that although the Apostles' Creed has no place in the formularies of this Church, it is in accordance with its teaching.
2. It must be noted also that some of the Churches represented in this Conference conjoin tradition with the Scriptures, some are explicit in subordinating Creeds to the Scriptures, some attach a primary importance to their particular Confessions, and some make no use of Creeds.
3. It is understood that the use of these Creeds will be determined by the competent authority in each Church, and that the several Churches will continue to make use of such special Confessions as they possess.

REPORT OF SECTION V

received by the full Conference, *nem. con.*,
August 20, 1927

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

We members of the Conference on Faith and Order are happy to report that we find ourselves in substantial accord in the following five propositions:

1. The ministry is a gift of God through Christ to His Church and is essential to the being and well-being of the Church.
2. The ministry is perpetually authorised and made effective through Christ and His Spirit.
3. The purpose of the ministry is to impart to men the saving and sanctifying benefits of Christ through pastoral service, the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of the sacraments, to be made effective by faith.
4. The ministry is entrusted with the government and discipline of the Church, in whole or in part.
5. Men gifted for the work of the ministry, called by the Spirit and accepted by the Church are commissioned through an act of ordination by prayer and the laying on of hands to exercise the function of this ministry.

Within the many Christian communions into which in the course of history Christendom has been divided, various forms of ministry have grown up according to the circumstances of the several communions and their beliefs as to the mind of Christ and the guidance of the New Testament. These communions have been, in God's providence, manifestly and abundantly used by the Holy Spirit in His work of enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints. But the differences which have arisen in regard to the authority and functions of these various forms of ministry have been and are the occasion of manifold doubts, questions and misunderstandings.

These differences concern the nature of the ministry (whether consisting of one or several orders), the nature of ordination and of the grace conferred thereby, the function and authority of Bishops, and the nature of Apostolic succession. We believe that the first step toward the overcoming of these difficulties is the frank recognition that they exist, and the clear definition of

their nature. We therefore add as an appendix to our Report such a statement, commending it to the thoughtful consideration of the Churches we represent.

By these differences the difficulties of inter-communion have been accentuated to the distress and wounding of faithful souls, while in the mission field, where the Church is fulfilling its primary object to preach the Gospel to every creature, the young Churches find the lack of unity a very serious obstacle to the furtherance of the Gospel. Consequently the provision of a ministry acknowledged in every part of the Church as possessing the sanction of the whole Church is an urgent need.

There has not been time in this Conference to consider all the points of difference between us in the matter of the ministry with that care and patience which could alone lead to complete agreement. The same observation applies equally to proposals for the constitution of the United Church. Certain suggestions as to possible church organisation have been made, which we transmit to the Churches with the earnest hope that common study of these questions will be continued by the members of the various Churches represented in this Conference.

In view of (1) the place which the Episcopate, the Councils of Presbyters, and the Congregation of the faithful, respectively, had in the constitution of the early Church, and (2) the fact that episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems of government are each today, and have been for centuries, accepted by great communions in Christendom, and (3) the fact that episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems are each believed by many to be essential to the good order of the Church, we therefore recognise that these several elements must all, under conditions which require further study, have an appropriate place in the order of life of a reunited Church, and that each separate communion, recalling the abundant blessing of God vouchsafed to its ministry in the past, should gladly bring to the common life of the united Church its own spiritual treasures.

If the foregoing suggestion be accepted and acted upon, it is essential that the acceptance of any special form of ordination as the regular and orderly method of introduction into the ministry of the Church for the future should not be interpreted to imply the acceptance of any one particular theory of the origin, character or function of any office in the Church, or to involve the acceptance of any adverse judgment on the validity of ordination in those branches of the Church universal that believe themselves

to have retained valid and apostolic Orders under other forms of ordination; or as disowning or discrediting a past or present ministry of the Word and Sacrament which has been used and blessed by the Spirit of God.

It is further recognised that inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon every believer, and each believer has an immediate access to God through Jesus Christ, and since special gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as teaching, preaching, and spiritual counsel, are the treasures of the Church as well as of the individual, it is necessary and proper that the Church should make fuller use of such gifts for the development of its corporate spiritual life and for the extension of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

In particular, we share in the conviction, repeatedly expressed in this Conference, that pending the solution of the questions of faith and order in which agreements have not yet been reached, it is possible for us, not simply as individuals but as Churches, to unite in the activities of brotherly service which Christ has committed to His disciples. We therefore commend to our Churches the consideration of the steps which may be immediately practicable to bring our existing unity in service to more effective expression.

In conclusion, we express our thankfulness to Almighty God for the great progress which has been made in recent years in the mutual approach of the Churches to one another, and our conviction that we must go forward with faith and courage, confident that with the blessing of God we shall be able to solve the problems that lie before us.

NOTES.

1. The following is the view of the Orthodox Church, as formulated for us by its representatives.

“The Orthodox Church, regarding the ministry as instituted in the Church by Christ Himself, and as the body which by a special charisma is the organ through which the Church spreads its means of grace such as the sacraments, and believing that the ministry in its threefold form of Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons can only be based on the unbroken apostolic succession, regrets that it is unable to come in regard to the ministry into some measure of agreement with many of the Churches represented at this Conference; but prays God that He, through His Holy Spirit, will guide to union even in regard to this difficult point of disagreement.”

2. In Western Christendom also there are conspicuous differences.

One representative view includes the following points: (a) that there have always been various grades of the ministry, each with its own function; (b) that ordination is a sacramental act of divine institution, and therefore indispensable, conveying the special charisma for the particular ministry; (c) that Bishops who have received their office by succession from the Apostles are the necessary ministers of ordination; (d) that the apostolic succession so understood is necessary for the authority of the ministry, the visible unity of the Church, and the validity of the sacraments.

On the other hand it is held by many Churches represented in the Conference (a) that essentially there is only one ministry, that of the Word and Sacraments; (b) that the existing ministries in these Churches are agreeable to the New Testament, are proved by their fruits and have due authority in the Church, and the sacraments ministered by them are valid; (c) that no particular form of ministry is necessary to be received as a matter of faith; (d) that the grace which fits men for the ministry is immediately given by God, and is recognised, not conferred, in ordination.

Further we record that there are views concerning the ministry which are intermediate between the types just mentioned. For instance, some who adhere to an episcopal system of church government do not consider that the apostolic succession as described above is a vital element of episcopacy, or they reject it altogether. Others do not regard as essential the historic Episcopate. Those who adhere to presbyteral systems of church government believe that the apostolic ministry is transmissible and has been transmitted through Presbyters orderly associated for the purpose. Those who adhere to the congregational system of government define their ministry as having been and being transmitted according to the precedent and example of the New Testament.

REPORT OF SECTION VI

received by the full Conference, *nem. con.*,
August 20, 1927

THE SACRAMENTS.

We are convinced that for the purpose in view in this Conference we should not go into detail in considering Sacraments — by some called “Mysteries.” The purpose therefore of this statement is to show that there may be a common approach to and appreciation of Sacraments on the part of those who may otherwise differ in conception and interpretation.

We testify to the fact that the Christian world gives evidence of an increasing sense of the significance and value of Sacraments, and would express our belief that this movement should be fostered and guided as a means of deepening the life and experience of the Churches. In this connection we recognise that the Sacraments have special reference to the corporate life and fellowship of the Church and that the grace is conveyed by the Holy Spirit, taking of the things of Christ and applying them to the soul through Faith.

We agree that Sacraments are of divine appointment and that the Church ought thankfully to observe them as divine gifts.

We hold that in the Sacraments there is an outward sign and an inward grace, and that the Sacraments are means of grace through which God works invisibly in us. We recognise also that in the gifts of His grace God is not limited by His own Sacraments.

The Orthodox Church and others hold that there are seven Sacraments and that for their valid administration there must be a proper form, a proper matter and a proper ministry. Others can regard only Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as Sacraments. Others again, while attaching high value to the sacramental principle, do not make use of the outward signs of Sacraments, but hold that all spiritual benefits are given through immediate contact with God through His Spirit. In this Conference we lay stress on the two Sacraments of Baptism and Lord’s Supper, because they are the Sacraments which are generally acknowledged by the members of this Conference.

We believe that in Baptism administered with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins, we are baptised by one Spirit into one body. By this state-

ment it is not meant to ignore the difference in conception, interpretation and mode which exist among us.

We believe that in the Holy Communion our Lord is present, that we have fellowship with God our Father in Jesus Christ His Son, our Living Lord, who is our one Bread, given for the life of the world, sustaining the life of all His people, and that we are in fellowship with all others who are united to Him. We agree that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the Church's most sacred act of worship in which the Lord's atoning death is commemorated and proclaimed, and that it is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and an act of solemn self-oblation.

There are among us divergent views, especially as to (1) the mode and manner of the presence of our Lord; (2) the conception of the commemoration and the sacrifice; (3) the relation of the elements to the grace conveyed; and (4) the relation between the minister of this Sacrament and the validity and efficacy of the rite. We are aware that the reality of the divine presence and gift in this Sacrament cannot be adequately apprehended by human thought or expressed in human language.

We close this statement with the prayer that the differences which prevent full communion at the present time may be removed.

FOREWORD TO THE REPORT ON SUBJECT VII.

The report of Section VII, on the Unity of Christendom and the relation thereto of existing Churches, was presented to the Conference on Thursday, August 18, by the Chairman of the section, the Archbishop of Upsala, and after discussion, in which various amendments were proposed, "was referred to the Drafting Committee for the consideration of the proposed amendments." The text of the first draft, together with an abstract of the discussion, is found in the official Proceedings of the Conference ("Faith and Order"), pages 396-403.

In the absence of the Archbishop of Upsala, a revision of the Report was presented to the full Conference on Saturday, August 20, by the Archbishop of Armagh, the Vice-Chairman of the Section. After debate, in which it appeared that the revision would not receive the unanimous approval of the Conference, the President suggested as a proposal likely to meet all difficulties "that the Report should be received by the Conference in the same way as the other reports, but on the understanding that it should be referred to the Continuation Committee for further consideration," it being further explained "that the Continuation Committee would take such action as it considered advisable in view of the knowledge it had of the situation." This proposal was adopted by the Conference. The text of the revised report, together with a brief abstract of the discussion which followed, is found in the Proceedings of the Conference, pages 435-439.

At a meeting of the Continuation Committee held on August 20, 1927, the following action was taken:

With reference to the report on Subject VII which had been received by the World Conference on Faith and Order for transmission to the Continuation Committee, it was agreed that a committee be appointed with the duty of considering the whole situation with regard to Subject VII and reporting back to the Business Committee. The following were named:

Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Gloucester, Convener
Rev. William Adams Brown, D.D.
Rt. Rev. James DeWolf Perry, D.D.
Gen.-Sup. D.Dr. Otto Dibelius
Rev. Timothy Tingfang Lew, Ph.D.

At the suggestion of the President of the Conference, the Archbishop of Upsala was afterwards added to the Committee.

Acting under the instructions thus given, the Committee prepared a revised draft of Report VII in which, without introducing any new matter of their own, they endeavored to meet the criticisms which had been made of the Report in its earlier forms by rearrangement of material, by more exact reference to previous actions of the Conference itself, and by following more consistently the precedent set in earlier reports of stating alternative positions where there was difference of view.

In the course of its deliberations the Committee received valuable suggestions from many members of the Conference, especially from the Archbishop of Armagh, Professor Merle d'Aubigné, and Archbishop Germanos. The latter contributed valuable notes on the attitude of the Orthodox Church to certain points raised in the Report.

The Report, thus amended and revised, was presented to the Business Committee on December 21, 1927, and after full consideration and the adoption of certain minor amendments is by them submitted to the churches for such consideration as they may desire to give it.

REPORT ON SUBJECT VII

THE UNITY OF CHRISTENDOM AND THE RELATION THERETO OF EXISTING CHURCHES

Reports II to VI register the degree of unity in the conception of the Church to which the Conference has thus far attained. It remains in this closing report to consider the consequences which follow for the existing churches.

I

Report II declares that "the message of the Church to the world is and must always remain the Gospel of Jesus Christ . . . the joyful message of redemption, both here and hereafter, the gift of God to sinful man in Jesus Christ."

Report III declares that "God who has given us the Gospel for the salvation of the world has appointed His Church to witness by life and word to its redeeming power . . . As there is but one Christ, and one life in Him, and one Holy Spirit who guides into all truth, so there is and can be but one Church, holy, catholic, and apostolic."

Report IV declares that "notwithstanding the differences in doctrine among us, we are united in a common Christian Faith which is proclaimed in the Holy Scriptures and is witnessed to and safeguarded in the Ecumenical Creed, commonly called the Nicene, and in the Apostles' Creed, which Faith is continually confirmed in the spiritual experience of the Church of Christ."

Report V declares that "the ministry is a gift of God through Christ to His Church and is essential to the being and well-being of the Church . . . The purpose of the ministry is to impart to men the saving and sanctifying benefits of Christ through pastoral service, the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of the sacraments, to be made effective by faith."

Report VI declares that "Sacraments are of divine appointment and that the Church ought thankfully to observe them as divine gifts;" that they "have special reference to the corporate life and fellowship of the Church and that the grace is conveyed by the Holy Spirit, taking of the things of Christ and applying them to the soul through faith."

II

The unity of the Church implies a unity in Faith and Order, but it does not mean uniformity. There must be space for divers types of expression, provided that those things which safeguard the unity in essentials are maintained. The various communions should bring into the common life of the Church those elements which express their characteristic gifts, so that nothing of the rich variety which marks Christian experience will be lost, and the liberty of interpretation within the limits of the accepted faith will be preserved.

Further there are differences as to the ultimate form which it is God's will His Church should take. Some hold that this form "was determined by Christ Himself and is therefore unchangeable; others that the one Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit may express itself in varying forms" (Report III), and therefore make place in their view of the Church of the future for diversity of doctrine, worship and order. Still others admit diversity of worship and order, but not of doctrine.

This difference of ideal affects the view taken of the steps through which the ideal is to be reached, some interpreting the limit of legitimate variation in doctrinal statement and in the administration of church ordinances more strictly than others; but there is widespread agreement that there must be some unity of faith and practice and some liberty of interpretation as to the nature of sacramental grace and of ministerial order and authority. (See the appended "Note to Section II.")

III

As the individual disciple is known by his fruits, so the unity of the disciples is shown by their fellowship in the service of the Master. Report V declares that, "pending the solution of the questions of faith and order in which agreements have not yet been reached, it is possible for us, not simply as individuals but as Churches, to unite in the activities of brotherly service which Christ has committed to His disciples;" but there is difference as to the exact form this coöperation should take.

In his Encyclical Letter of 1920, the Ecumenical Patriarch proposed "that a league or council of the churches should be formed for practical purposes." It has been suggested that such a council might be evolved from already existing organizations, such as the Continuation Committee on Life and Work, consisting of representatives officially appointed by almost all the Christian

communions, and other organizations of similar nature. Some of us believe that such a council if formed should include, as its two branches, questions of life and work and of faith and order. Others believe that, for the present, it would be wiser for the movements represented by Stockholm and Lausanne to develop in independence, each following its own way; but there is general agreement that ultimately life, work, faith and order are expressions of an existing spiritual unity, and that each requires the other for its complete fruition. "We therefore commend to our Churches the consideration of the steps which may be immediately practicable to bring our existing unity in service to more effective expression" (Report V).

IV

As material for such consideration, the following suggestions which it was impossible adequately to discuss at Lausanne are passed on to the churches:

1. In preparation for closer fellowship, each communion should seek more intimate knowledge of the faith and life, worship and order of the others. Differences which are the outgrowth of complicated historical developments, may preserve some aspect of truth or of life which is of value to the church as a whole, or they may sometimes prove to be less important than they are supposed to be. As the different communions come to know one another better, they will grow in understanding and in appreciation of one another.

2. It has not been possible for the Conference to consider with the care which it deserves the relation of the existing churches to one another or the place which each or any of them may hold in the undivided church. We commend to the churches the suggestions which have been made on this subject in the addresses delivered at the Conference. In the meantime, we welcome the movement already under way for the union of bodies of similar doctrine, polity and worship, and trust that it may continue with ever greater success.

3. Pending the complete, organic union of the different churches, we note with satisfaction a number of movements for practical coöperation along social, evangelistic and other lines. Experience shows that it has been possible for widely separate bodies to coöperate in such movements with mutual profit and without surrender of principle. (See the appended "Notes to Section IV," Note A.) There is abundant evi-

dence that when communions undertake together the divine task of bringing the love of Christ to those who do not know Him, they become closer to one another. Especially we commend to the churches the consideration of what steps can be taken to eliminate needless overlapping and competition in the local community; that in ways consistent with the genius of the several communions, our existing unity in Christ may be manifest to the world. (See the appended "Notes to Section IV," Note B.)

V

We note with gratitude to God the recent increase of effective coöperation in the mission field. The purpose of all missionary work is to carry the eternal Gospel to the ends of the earth, so that it may meet the spiritual needs of every nation and bring all men to the Saviour. Here more than anywhere else unity is essential. We note with sympathy the degree of union which has already been attained in many countries and the plans which are proposed for further union. We commend these plans to the churches for their careful consideration.

The demand which comes from the churches of the Mission field is that the Churches at home should grant them greater freedom of action, and that their hopes of unity should not be frustrated by the long-continued acquiescence in disunion at home which makes it difficult to recognize how fatal disunion is to the new indigenous churches.

VI

Complete fellowship in the Church will be realized only when the way is opened for all God's children to join in communion at the Lord's table. Through prayer and thoughtful deliberation the steps must be found which will most effectively lead to this goal. Ambiguous statements and hasty measures may hinder rather than hasten the work of unification. Yet if we are ever to become one, we must not shrink from the task. Some of us believe that full communion can be reached only at the end of the process of unification; others that it may be used by God as the means to that end. Whatever the way to the goal, complete unity will require that the Churches be so transformed that there may be full recognition of one another by members of all communions.

Nothing will do more to hasten the union for which we all long than that in our daily prayer, both as individuals and as churches, we should remember one another. It has been suggested that

a common prayer be sent out in the name of the Conference to be used at a convenient time by all Christian Churches. Especially would we bear on our hearts before God our brethren who are passing through suffering, praying that grace may be given to them to stand firm under their afflictions, and that to them and to us alike, God will grant the spirit of sacrifice as we remember the word of the Lord Jesus: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." God give us, both as individuals and as churches, wisdom and courage to do His will.

NOTE TO SECTION II

It must be noted that representatives of the Orthodox Church would guard their acceptance of any diversity in matters of Faith and Order (Section II) by the following limitations.

- (a) The types of expression so far as these types have been established by Ecumenical Synods must be maintained.
- (b) Liberty of interpretation comes within the sphere of the Church as a whole and not of different sections or individuals.
- (c) They cannot agree that "there must be some liberty of interpretation as to the nature of sacramental grace, and of ministerial order and authority."
- (d) They admit differences in worship so long as they do not diverge from the common doctrinal basis, on which is based the Holy Worship as handed down from the times of the Apostles.

NOTES TO SECTION IV, PAR. 3

A. There are some who believe that coöperation should take the form of federation, either local, national, or international: others oppose federation, fearing that it may become a substitute for complete organic union. In the interest of clarity of thought it is important to remember that the word "federation" is used in at least three different senses. It may denote either

1. A substitute for organic union.
2. A step on the road to organic union.
3. A form of organic union.

In discussing federation it is important to make clear in which of these different senses the word is used.

B. It is suggested that in the case of communions of similar doctrine and polity, the desired expression of unity may often be secured by the method of denominational comity. In the case of those communions which are separated by fundamental differences of view, the problem is more difficult and will require special consideration.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

drafted by the Chairman of the Conference
at its request

We have finished our immediate task. From first to last we are able to express it in constructive terms written and received, whether they be statements of agreement or statements of difference, in brotherly love and mutual consideration. They are the product of the minds of men who earnestly desired and strove to place and keep themselves under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. Human imperfections which mingle with them we pray God to pardon. In offering to Him our handiwork, we are but returning to Him that which He has given to us. We pray His acceptance of and blessing upon our offering.

However, we have not finished our whole task. We have but taken a step on a long journey. The Conference was only a new starting point. What we did there will crumble into dust unless the representatives at Lausanne bring home to their several Churches the duty and responsibility of studying the Reports which they themselves received for this very purpose. The Conference should be repeated in every main ecclesiastical assembly, as well as in each separate congregation, throughout our entire Christian constituency if we are to take full advantage of the progress registered. By our presence and activity at Lausanne we are solemnly pledged to reproduce, each in his own local circle, the spirit and method which made the World Conference on Faith and Order what it was. "I pray you to give me the utter joy of knowing you are living in harmony, with the same feelings of love, with one heart and soul, never acting for private ends or from vanity, but humbly considering each other the better man, and each with an eye to the interests of others as well as to his own. Treat one another with the same spirit as you experience in Christ Jesus."*

We who have been privileged to labor together have done so in the joyousness of unhampered freedom. We must not forget, in the liberty which is to us a commonplace, the sufferings which some of our Christian brethren are at this very moment undergoing. Deprived of liberty, in hostile surroundings, their cry goes up to God from the house of their martyrdom. Our prayers enfold them and our sympathy stretches out affectionate arms toward them.

*Phil. 2: 2-5, Moffatt's translation.

Finally, we commend the Christian Churches, whether represented in the Conference or not, to our Heavenly Father's guidance and safe keeping, looking earnestly toward the day when the full mind of God will control all the affairs of mankind.

. . . the beginnings of unity are to be found in the clear statement and full consideration of those things in which we differ, as well as of those things in which we are at one . . .

(Initiatory Report, Cincinnati, 1910).

Authorized Report

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